STEPS IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS



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NINE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS STEPS CRITICAL FOR ENABLING A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE





If you focus on results, you will never change. If you focus on change, you will get results.

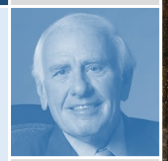
Jack Dixon

A structured organizational change process is crucial because it provides clarity, direction, and consistency when navigating transitions, helping employees understand the purpose, steps, and expected outcomes. It reduces uncertainty, aligns efforts across different levels of the organization, and increases the likelihood of achieving desired results.

However, implementing such a process is challenging – resistance to change, communication breakdowns, and competing priorities can hinder progress. Leaders must also balance maintaining day-to-day operations with driving transformation, all while fostering trust and engagement to ensure sustainable adoption of new ways of working.

STEP I

CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY



Without a sense of urgency, desire loses its value.

Jim Rohn



Importance

- Sense of urgency jolts people out of complacency and highlights the risks of standing still.
- Urgency ensures that employees see change not as a management fad, but as a necessary response to real threats and opportunities.
- Urgency builds energy and mobilizes people to act quickly instead of waiting for others.

Challenges

- Leaders may struggle to frame the urgency in a way that resonates across all levels of the organization (executives versus front-line staff).
- Too much urgency can feel like scare tactics, leading to cynicism or resistance.
- If urgency is not sustained, the initial momentum fades and people slip back into old routines.

STEP II

ALIGN THE GUIDING TEAM



If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.

Henry Ford



Importance

- A strong, united guiding coalition legitimizes the change and reassures employees that change is not just one leader's agenda.
- Cross-functional alignment ensures that organizational silos do not block progress.
- A guiding team creates role models – people look to them to see if leadership 'walks the talk.'

Challenges

- Political rivalries or turf wars can undermine trust within the guiding team.
- Some leaders may be supportive in meetings but subtly sabotage change behind the scenes.
- Securing commitment from influential but skeptical stakeholders can take time and require negotiation.

STEP III

DEVELOP CHANGE VISION AND STRATEGY



Change is not a destination, just as hope is not a strategy.

Rudy Giuliani



Importance

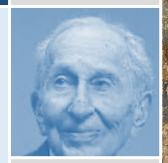
- A compelling vision gives employees a ‘north star’ – clarity about where the organization is heading.
- The strategy shows the roadmap – how to get there – and provides milestones for measuring progress.
- Together, vision and strategy inspire belief that the change is achievable and worth the effort.

Challenges

- Leaders may struggle to articulate the vision simply enough for everyone to understand.
- Overly abstract vision risks leaving employees confused or disengaged.
- Balancing ambition with realism is tricky: too ambitious and it feels impossible; too modest and it will not inspire action.

STEP IV

COMMUNICATE AND ENCOURAGE A DIALOGUE



A dialogue is more than two monologues.

Max M. Kampelman



Importance

- Communication reduces fear and uncertainty, which are natural reactions to change.
- Two-way dialogue allows employees to voice concerns, which makes them feel valued and reduces resistance.
- Repeated, transparent communication builds trust and prevents rumors from derailing a progress.

Challenges

- Leaders often underestimate how much communication is needed – people need to hear the message many times in different forms.
- If communication is inconsistent across managers, employees may get mixed messages.
- Some leaders prefer top-down broadcasts, but real engagement requires listening and dialogue.

For more information on how to communicate with a diversity of stakeholders, see presentation: **Understanding and engaging stakeholders.**

STEP V

EMPOWER YOUR ORGANIZATION



As we look ahead, leaders will be those who empower others.

Bill Gates



Importance

- Empowered employees take ownership of the change instead of waiting for instructions.
- Removing obstacles (like bureaucracy, unclear policies, or outdated processes) frees people to act quickly.
- Empowerment fosters confidence, creativity, and local problem-solving.

Challenges

- Empowerment requires leaders to let go of control, which can be uncomfortable.
- Middle managers often feel squeezed: they are expected to empower teams but may lack the authority themselves.
- Without clear boundaries, empowerment can lead to inconsistency or duplication of effort.

For more information on employee empowerment and accountability, see presentation: **Employee empowerment and accountability.**

STEP VI

FOCUS ON SPEED IN PLACE OF PERFECTION



Even though you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.

Will Rogers



Importance

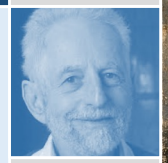
- Quick wins create visible evidence that change is working, which builds confidence and momentum.
- Speed prevents paralysis by analysis – moving forward even with imperfect information shows decisiveness.
- Iterative progress (learn–adjust–move again) builds resilience and adaptability.

Challenges

- Some employees and leaders may resist acting without exhaustive planning.
- Mistakes are inevitable with speed, so the organization must tolerate learning from failure.
- In highly regulated or safety-critical industries, ‘speed over perfection’ must be balanced carefully.

STEP VII

ENABLE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT



If you don't do it, you'll never know what would have happened if you had done it.

Ashleigh Brilliant



Importance

- Encourages people to experiment with new ways of working, driving innovation and adaptability.
- Builds a culture where employees feel safe to challenge old assumptions and propose better solutions.
- Fosters a long-term resilience – the organization learns how to continuously reinvent itself.

Challenges

- Many organizations are risk-averse; shifting to an entrepreneurial mindset requires cultural change.
- Without accountability, ‘entrepreneurial’ efforts can turn into unfocused initiatives.
- Employees may hesitate to innovate if they fear blame or punishment for failure.

STEP VIII

ANCHOR THE CHANGE INTO THE CULTURE



You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi



Importance

- Change only lasts when it becomes part of ‘the way we do things here.’
- Anchoring change ensures that new behaviors and values persist even when leadership changes.
- Embedding change into culture reinforces consistency and builds long-term stability.

Challenges

- Culture is invisible but powerful – deeply rooted habits and mindsets are hard to shift.
- Old behaviors often resurface in times of stress or crisis.
- Leaders must consistently reinforce new behaviors through policies, performance management, and rewards.

TAKE ACTION

Chaotic action is preferable to orderly inaction.

Will Rogers





Importance

- Action is where change efforts are translated from theory into reality.
- Visible progress keeps people motivated and demonstrates credibility.
- Taking action shows that leadership is serious, which helps convert sceptics.

Challenges

- If early actions are not well chosen, they may fail and damage momentum.
- Sustaining action over the long term is difficult – enthusiasm may fade after initial wins.
- Poor coordination between different parts of the organization can create bottlenecks or duplication.

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THANK YOU

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